

MICHAEL TOMLINSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Sian Thomas
Network Rail
Director of Engineering and Asset Management
Southern Region

December 2022

Dear Sian,

I was pleased that a meeting was arranged between Network Rail and Dorset Council to discuss the ongoing issue of Wareham Level Crossing. I am grateful that you have taken the time to visit the crossing in person and to hear of the concerns that the local community have over the long-term future of the crossing.

At the meeting it was reiterated that access across the railway line was essential for the local community and that closure would be hugely detrimental – essentially cutting the community in two. This issue has been unresolved for many years and with the clock ticking, it is important that some progress is made towards finding a sustainable and safe solution.

The current situation is not sustainable and I have been calling for consideration to be given to automated barriers so that the crossing can remain safe and access maintained. I was hugely encouraged that assessing the feasibility of automation was discussed positively at the meeting and I am writing now to urge you to press ahead with a feasibility study. This ought to be conducted with a view to making it possible, a positive approach to using technology to keep this important crossing open. It is important to the communities of Wareham and Sandford that this option has been given a fair assessment. I do not believe that other options that have previously been proposed are as suitable as automated crossings and therefore any meaningful progress will be difficult until this is properly looked at.

Retaining access across the lines with an automated crossing remains the most popular and desired outcome within the community. This is an issue that I receive significant correspondence about. This is not a small matter for local residents and I am determined to find a solution that is acceptable to the community.

Once again, I am grateful for your engagement on this issue and for considering the options around automation. I would welcome confirmation in writing that you are going to formally consider how automated barriers could be installed alongside an approximate timeline for this work that I would share with the community to help alleviate concerns.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael."

Michael Tomlinson MP

Member of Parliament for Mid Dorset and North Poole